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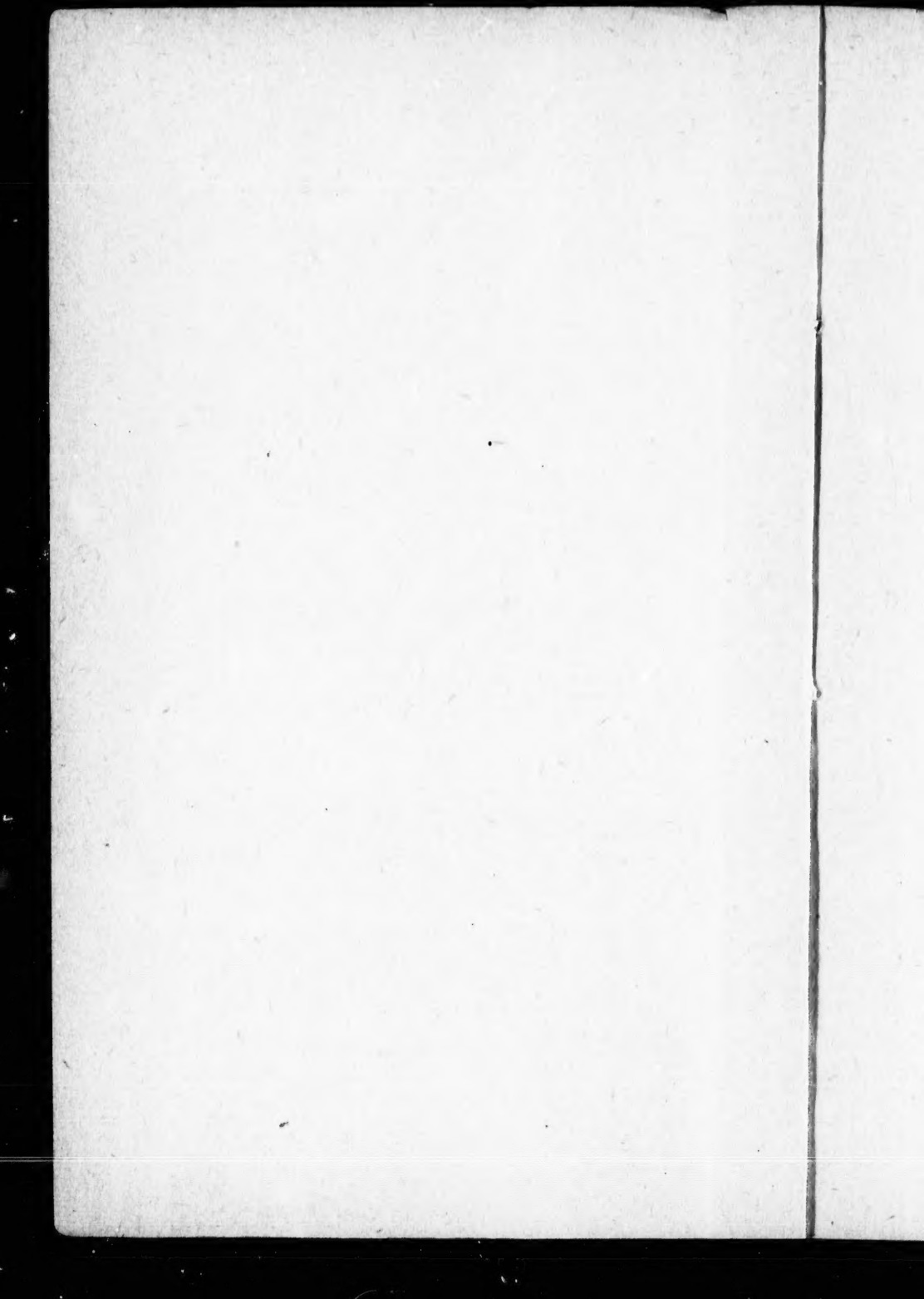
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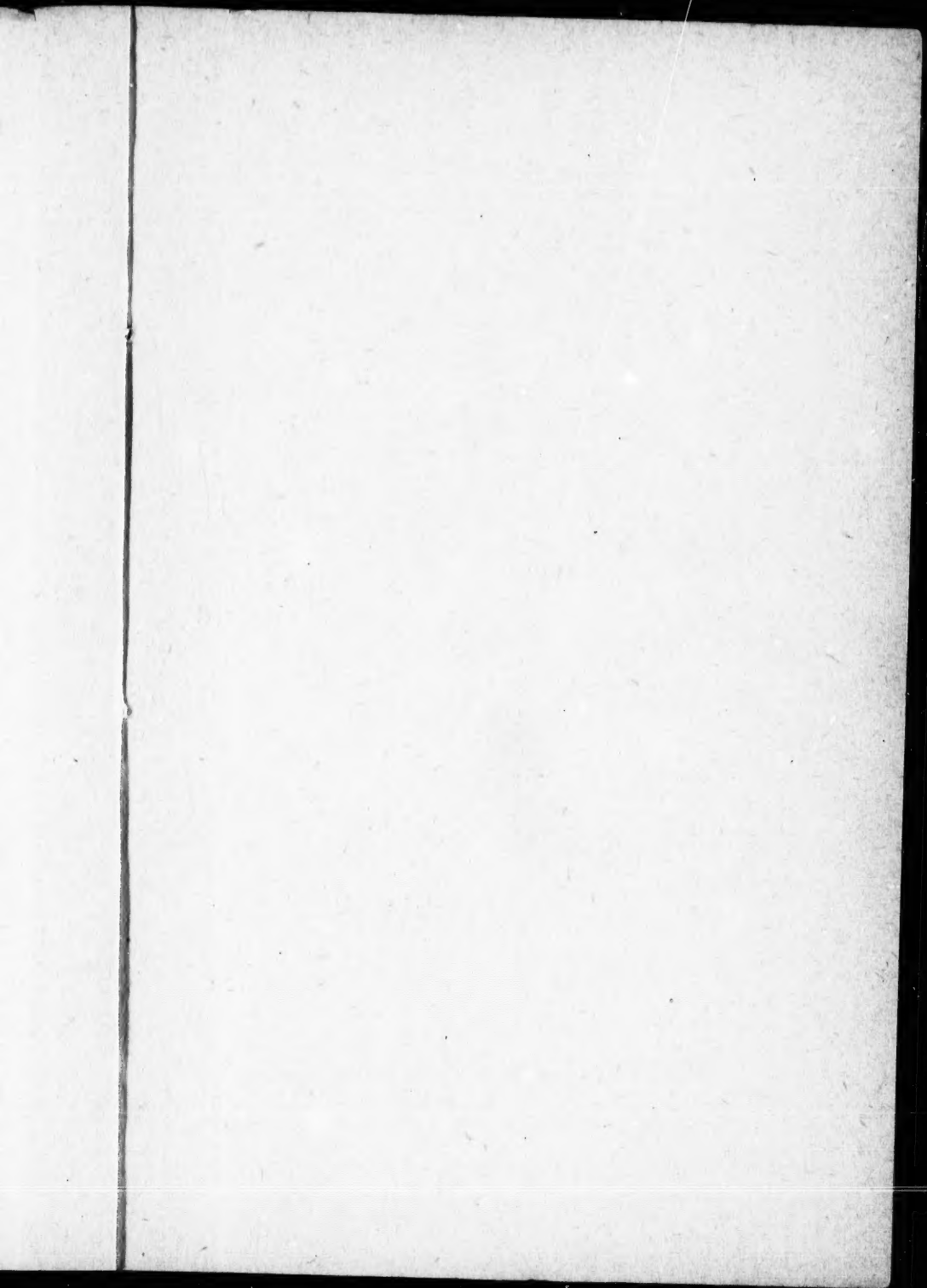
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“1907”

—BY—

WALLACE McLEAN



CHARLOTTETOWN :

PRINTED BY JOHN COOMBS, STEAM PRINTER

1894.

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With the Author's Compliments.

“1907.”

BY WALLACE MACLEAN.

I.

AS Time ushers into existence the eventful year, 1907, Time also, by this complaisant act, brings to a close one of the greatest wars that ever cursed humanity on this old globe of ours. By the treaty of Pacific, peace has just been declared between the two great rival powers, the United States and England, by the latter country agreeing to confer on the United States the whole of Canada, and in return the United States agreeing to withdraw her fleet of gunboats from British waters, and particularly from the shores of Spain, now in British possession.

Thus the war, which ended with the beginning of 1907, brought about many changes, and the most conspicuous alteration of all was the ceding of Canada to the United States and making it part and parcel of the Great Republic.

* * * *

It was on the evening of a certain day in the spring of 1907, that two men stood on the eastern

bank of Point Levis, overlooking the noble Augsburg River. On the opposite bank a great city could be discerned rearing its tall towers, veiled in the glory of the setting sun, and reflected in the placid bosom of the river, whose shining surface was dotted with craft of almost every size and description. Upon the sloping banks—green to the very edges that kissed the river's waters—comfortable homesteads could be seen, with well tilled farms and gardens—evidences of peace, prosperity and contentment.

Of the two men, already referred to as being spectators of this glowing scene, one was a man of two score years, with handsome features and erect form. He was a man whose face bore the stamp of intelligence, illuminated with the light of courage and determination; of medium height, rather stout, yet agile in his movements. Any ordinary observer, would unhesitatingly pronounce him an Englishman, and his carriage would pronounce him to the same observer as being by profession a soldier. General Sir George Natells he was, an English general whose bravery and skill had won for him a title and the everlasting gratitude of the English people.

The other was a man of about five and sixty, tall and wiry in form; with a countenance rather repulsive than otherwise. He had a hooked nose, piercing grey eyes, a small mouth and uneven

teeth. His head was covered with yellow hair, which fell in great ringlets down almost to his shoulders. He was one of those men who possess no attraction for the beholder, but rather impress him with their hideousness instead. Count Vensieque, (for this was this man's name), was an all-powerful German nobleman, having vast wealth and, consequently, great influence in his native country. Slaves that bend a knee to a tyrant's despotic sway, bow, not in respect, but in fear—not because they are favorably impressed with a sense of the tyrant's greatness, but because it is easier and more pleasant to bow than to starve! This latter was true in Count Vensieque's case, as it is in almost every instance where royalty rules supreme. And the days of royalty were not past in 1907.

An animated conversation is in progress between Count Vensieque and General Natells, from the tone of which it is evident that it is of anything but of a friendly nature. The subject of the conversation is a young Englishman, Walter Buston, by name, and a lieutenant in General Natell's army. While travelling through Germany he was seized by Count Vensieque's orders and for some trifling offence cast into prison. General Natells at the present time is demanding the release of the young lieutenant, a demand which Vensieque refuses to comply with,

remarking at the same time, that it is his intention to compel the lieutenant to fight on the German side, should the war which is threatening to spring up between France and that country materialize.

"Only Buston resents this, and swears he will never comply with my request," the count adds contemptuously.

"Noble lad," the general exclaims, "And he shall not! Not if I can prevent it!"

"You will take extraordinary pains to prevent me carrying out my wish, I have no doubt. Be assured that you are welcome to all the satisfaction you will receive by doing so!"

"I am not so sure of that. If you execute your threat of placing Lieutenant Buston in front of your army, I will have the satisfaction of carrying him from out of your clutches, and if you attempt to interfere, I will run my sword through your lank body?"

Exasperated beyond all bounds by this speech, Count Vensieque, with a face livid with rage, lays his hand on the jewelled hilt of his sword, and attempts to draw it. But Natells, noticing the action, steps hastily forward and throws him heavily to the ground. The count rises, covered with dust, and bleeding, but does not attempt to proceed with the quarrel, merely remarking in a

careless tone, that they would settle the affair on the morrow.

"As you please," the general responds. "And I presume your Countship will let the affair also decide as to whether Walter Buston is to remain your prisoner or not?"

"Yes," the count returns. "We have nothing further to say, I believe. To-morrow, at eight, we will meet at Lester Grove and decide the matter. Good day?"

"Good day!" the general responds, as he strolls leisurely away, whistling a popular air of the day.

II.

THE outlines of a huge stone-built prison are reflected in the moonlit waters which skirt the isle of Heligoland, a German stronghold, upon which stands, in addition to the prison, a massive stone fort, with rows of brightly polished cannon; the sight of which impresses the beholder with a sense of their potency. The night is fine, and the old moon pours down her silvery rays from a cloudless sky, which penetrate into many a dark cranny around the picturesque old fort, and into many a lonely prison cell, to gladden the heart of its occupant.

Alone in a dismal cell which overhung the water, the solemn stillness of which place was broken only by the water's gentle murmurings, sat a young man—scarcely in his eighteenth year—with head bowed sorrowfully down and bitterly weeping.

Far from home, from those he dearly loved, without a friend to aid or console him, without even a knowledge of why he had been imprisoned, was it extraordinary that Walter Buston's intrepid heart sank within him when he contemplated the hopelessness of his situation? For just as that useful little instrument, the thermometer, is affected by the weather's variations, so the mind of man is influenced by the nature of his surroundings.

How long the night is! How slow the hours are in gliding by! And that inveterate enemy to poor human kind. Time, stealing softly on the wings of silent night. Time ushering into existence glorious day. Time ending it. Time, regardless of the circumstances in which they are placed, curtailing men's lives. Lord and peasant, king and subject, alike its victims. No allowance made by Time. No favors shown by Time in its justice to all.

But now something occurred, as strange and startling in its nature as it was unexpected. In between the iron bars of the window of the cell

was hurled a missile, which struck the opposite wall with tremendous force, and rebounding, fell on the floor with a clink. Buston's first impression was that some attempt to take his life was being made, and he was about to call to his assistance the prison warden. But curiosity overcame his fears, and prompted him to stoop down and pick up the missile. It consisted of two pieces of iron, closely wedged together by means of two screws. It required very little effort to unscrew them, and when he had done so, he was amazed to find between the irons a carefully folded note and a flat door key. Striking a light, he unfolded the note and read:—

"DEAR FRIEND,

"In order to accomplish difficult tasks it is sometimes necessary to resort to stratagem. Therefore, in order to secure your release from this prison, it has been necessary for me to adopt this extraordinary way of communicating to you the plan by which you will regain your freedom. The writer of this note is an emissary of General Natells, and came here to-night with the intention of securing your release, which he will have no difficulty in doing if you observe the following instructions:

"Take the enclosed key, and to-night, as the prison clock strikes ten, open your cell door with it, go out and lock it after you. Once in the corridor turn to the right and follow along until you come to door number twenty. Open it—same manner you opened the other—and pass through, close and lock it after you. When outside of this door you will find yourself in a small guard-house, which constitutes the rear entrance to the prison. Pass through this, and open the first door you come to, and you will find yourself in the prison yard. At the prison gate you will find a man

stationed, to whom you will give the word 'Rounds,' (no other word must be spoken), and he will allow you to pass out unmolested. When outside of the prison gate turn to the west, and you will see a red light. Go in the direction of this light and all will then be made clear. You must exercise every caution, move noiselessly as a cat, and must not leave a second before the time given. This is all. Follow those instructions carefully, and in a few hours you will be a free man."

"WALLACE EMSON,

"Emissary to Sir Geo. Natells."

Astounded by this mysterious intelligence, the prisoner sat for some minutes gazing at the strange epistle with a face upon which was an expression of mingled wonder, fear and bewilderment. At length, recalling his scattered senses, he jumped up with the intention of fitting the key into the keyhole of the door, preparatory to opening it. But what was his amazement and disappointment to discover that there was no keyhole in the door at all, it being secured on the outside by means of a lock and chain!

Thinking that he had been the victim of a cruel joke, the young man threw himself down upon his wretched bed and burst into tears. But the words of the note—their tone denoted sincerity—and thinking that probably he had been astray in his supposition, he once more arose and scrutinized the door from top to bottom; but in vain. He was once more about to resign himself to despair, when, chancing to raise his eyes, he espied above the larger door a small hatch, or trap door, the

use of which he was unable to account for. In this door there was a keyhole, and inserting the key in it, it turned in the lock, and the door stood open on its hinges, leaving a space sufficiently large to admit of a man passing through.

Closing the door again, the prisoner sat down to await the appointed time. At length the clock in the prison tower struck the hour of ten. Removing his boots, he hastily drew a table against the door, climbed upon it, slid through the aperture, and carefully let himself down into the hall, pulling the door too, and locking it after him. He turned to the right, as directed, traversed the dimly lighted passage, swiftly but noiselessly, until he came to door number twenty. He opened it, and passing through found himself in the guard-house. A man was lying asleep on a bench, in a corner of the apartment—evidently the keeper of the place—and the prisoner, trembling lest he should waken and give the alarm, crept past him at a pace as swift as was consistent with his being able to execute without creating a disturbance. He soon reached the door at the end of the apartment, which was already open, and passing through it, found himself in the prison yard. The gate was only a short distance off, and upon reaching it, the prisoner was surprised to find it ajar, and no guard stationed at it. But the mystery was soon explained, for, on

reaching the outside, he perceived a man—evidently the guard—lying on the ground, bound hand and foot, and gagged.

Looking towards the west, Buston espied a red light, and set out with all speed in that direction. The way led along a road close to the edge of the water, and he had not travelled far before he could discern the dark outlines of a ship, anchored close to the shore, from the masthead of which the light was shining. A boat was hauled on the beach, and standing near it were a number of sailors, laughing and talking, as if their mission were attended with the slightest risk in the world.

As Buston drew near the boat, a tall, handsome young man stepped out from the crowd, and approaching him, said :

"General Natell's emissary. At your service, sir. I am overjoyed to find that our scheme has been attended with success. But we must not tarry here, for in a short time the prison officials will have discovered your escape and be on your track. Get in the boat, sir. Now, my hearties," (addressing the sailors), "push off!"

The men obeyed, and in a short time the boat, propelled by their vigorous strokes, was alongside the ship, which was a small British cruiser of about two hundred tons. The sails were then set, the anchor weighed, and as a fresh breeze had by this

time sprung up, she filled away rapidly, and soon the island of Heligoland was but a speck on the horizon.

III.

AS the clocks of a great city peal the hour of twelve upon a night so fine that there is scarcely air enough to rustle the leaves on the tall trees of a park on the outskirts of that city, a hansom, driven at a rapid rate, stops at the park gate, from which a man alights, and drawing his cloak around his shoulders, stations himself under the branches of a large tree, in evident expectation of the arrival of some person.

Presently the sound of footfalls on the gravel walk catches his ear, and a tall, handsome man approaches, and extending his hand, exclaims, in a pleasant voice :

"Why, really, friend Natells, it is a treat to see you !"

"And you, Frank," the other responds. "Why, you are the picture of health, and—by Jove—as handsome as ever !"

"I am glad that I am able to return the compliment in all sincerity," his friend replies. "Why, General, we must be lucky dogs, for we both perceive the same favorable features in each other !"

Of the two men, the reader can readily conceive that one was the English General, Sir George Natells. The other was Frank Marston, an American detective of great fame and ability. He was a man of about thirty, of splendid physique, handsome face, and captivating manner. The general and he were intimate friends, and reposed the utmost confidence in each other. There was a striking similarity both in the manner and appearance of the two men, which, no doubt, to a certain extent accounted for the strong attachment there existed between them.

After a few more words were exchanged, the two left the park, together, and proceeded along a fashionable street until they arrived in front of a brilliantly lighted and fashionable bar, when they halted and entered. Although the hour was late, there was still quite a number of persons inside. At the request of the general, the waiter conducted his friend and himself into a private sitting-room. The two seated themselves in the room and called for a drink of "nice," the fashionable drink of the day. They passed the night reclining on the comfortable sofas in this apartment.

Early in the morning the general was aroused by a knocking at the door of the room, and opening it he was confronted by a messenger, who handed him a note. After a hasty perusal of the same, he turned to the messenger and said: "Give

Count Vensieque my compliments, and tell him I will be at Lester Grove at the hour mentioned."

Then, arousing his friend Marston, the two repaired to the dining hall, where a cup of coffee and a biscuit constituted their breakfast. Enveloping themselves in great coats, (for it was yet before sunrise, and the air was damp), they boarded a cable car, which conveyed them to a certain street on the outskirts of the city proper. Here they alighted, and turning to the south, struck across a number of fields, until they came to a secluded spot, surrounded on one side by a high stone wall, and on the other three sides by tall trees.

"And so this is Lester Grove, is it?" inquired Marston, surveying his surroundings with a critical air.

"Yes; a fine place for a burying ground," returned the general, with a laugh.

At this juncture, two men advanced towards them from an opposite direction. They were Count Vensieque and his second, Sir Gerald Dirbey. The former bowed stiffly, while the latter sought to wither his rival with a glance, but finding the detective proof against sharp glances, he contented himself with inquiring, in a scornful tone, whether he (Marston), intended to assist him in selecting a suitable spot for the combat. Marston replied that he did; and the two setting to

work, soon had the spot selected and the required distance marked thereon.

These preliminaries adjusted, the two combatants stationed themselves on the selected ground, and the general, turning to his antagonist, asked,

"Well, your Countship, what shall it be—swords or pistols?"

"And so you positively refuse to apologize for your gross behaviour towards me, last evening?" the count inquired.

"Positively," the general replied. "I consider my behaviour towards you on that occasion as perfectly justifiable, and it is useless to waste any more words over the matter. I ask you again, what shall it be—swords or pistols?"

"Swords," returned the count, and he could not suppress a shudder as he did so.

The seconds, thereupon, handed each a sword, and the battle began. That the count was an experienced swordsman was evident from the manner in which he handled his weapon; and at first it looked as if he were going to have the battle all his own way. But it soon became evident that his antagonist was not putting forth any great effort at this particular time, but was merely acting on the defensive. Each one of the count's vigorous thrusts were skillfully parried by him; and only once did he manage to take the

general at a disadvantage, an insult which the latter immediately retributed by disarming him.

A short interval for rest, and the combat was resumed. But now, instead of acting on the defensive, Natells took the offensive, and kept his opponent continually parrying his neat sword-thrusts. Twice he had him at his mercy, but it was evident that he did not wish to take advantage of those opportunities, as he allowed him, each time, to remain unscathed, and appeared not to notice when he had him at a disadvantage.

At length, the count, who had been putting forth his utmost efforts to secure an advantage over his opponent, made a vigorous—and what nearly proved successful—thrust at his opponent's heart, with his sword. But Natells was on his guard, and stepping hastily to one side, the count lost his balance, stumbled and fell on the other's sword, the weapon burying itself deep into his side, from which the blood spouted in great profusion. The wounded man with an expression of agony on his countenance, turned towards his second in mute entreaty to assist him, and fell heavily to the ground. The others raised him to a sitting position, and with great difficulty succeeded in stopping the flow of blood. It was then discovered that he had received an additional injury, having in the fall broken his arm.

After seeing the wounded count conveyed safely

away in care of a surgeon, who had been dispatched for, and ascertaining from that gentleman that his injuries were not likely to prove fatal, the general and his friend left the scene of the combat and returned to the city.

IV.

IN a sumptuously furnished office, situated in a spacious building in one of the busiest parts of busy London, two men are seated, engaged in earnest conversation. The first I will describe is a man of about sixty, slightly below the medium height, and rather stout. His features are not altogether attractive, for in his dark eyes there is a suspicion of cunning, and in the smile that he almost continually wears, there is an indication of sarcasm and contempt. Yet for all this, Mr. Frederick Buston, (for this is this man's name), is not what one could consistently term a homely man. He has a florid face, which harmonizes with his dark eyes, and mustache slightly tinged with grey. His even teeth his associates very often behold, for he smiles to show his teeth and his amiable nature. Yet at times he is harsh, and naturally is cruel and selfish.

Mr. Fredrick Buston is a wealthy merchant; owner of vast estates in London vicinity and in

London proper. Like the majority of men in his position, he is mean, narrow-minded, and an adept in every artifice of cunning. He is one of those beings who exist for the sole purpose of worldly gain, and who will not scruple to stoop to any means—no matter how foul or contemptible—to benefit themselves in a worldly point of view.

His companion is a little, spare man, of about forty, with a hooked nose, pale and closely shaven face, and piercing grey eyes. He is dressed in a stylish suit of black, his hair is combed to a nicety, and his little finger is ornamented with two costly rings. This man is Mr. Cartell, a lawyer, who is looked upon with favor by the people of that part of London, and who commands a very large practice.

That the conversation is of momentous importance, is evident from the tone in which it is carried on. Our friend, Mr. Buston, referred to a subject with which the reader is already well acquainted, when he said, "And so that young scapegrace, Walter Buston, is safe in prison, and I am master of the situation?"

"Yes," his legal adviser answered. "Through the instrumentality of Count Vensieque and myself, we have been successful in terminating his career by having him safely lodged in prison on the isle of Heligoland."

"Ah!" an exclamation of satisfaction it evi-

dently is from Mr. Buston, accompanied by a long drawn breath.

"But, tell me," said Mr. Cartell, "why it is you have taken such extraordinary pains to have this young lieutenant put out of your reach in this manner?"

"For personal reasons, which I would not consider prudent to acquaint even my trusty legal adviser with," the client replied.

"Oh, pardon me," said the legal adviser. "I was not aware that you had any special reasons for refraining to enlighten me on this subject, especially when your humble servant is so deep in your confidence already!"

Mr. Buston turned slightly pale, perhaps the last words of his legal friend had acquainted him with some disagreeable fact! Finally he said:

"Well, Mr. Cartell, I have no great objection to acquainting you with my reasons for keeping this young Buston in confinement. That is if I can secure your promise that what I communicate to you regarding the matter will be kept secret."

"Oh, certainly," replied Mr. Cartell, with emphasis.

"Well, to begin with," said the other, "one of my strongest reasons for keeping Walter Buston in confinement is because I am his uncle!"

One would infer from Mr. Cartell's look of surprise at his client when that gentleman made

this extraordinary confession, that he had some doubts as to his sanity, but he merely said :

"Oh! ah, I see!"

"Yes," Mr. Buston continued. "This is one of my most cogent reasons for wishing Walter Buston out of my way. But I have a still greater reason than the one I have just mentioned, which, I greatly regret, my dear Cartell, I am not in a position at present to make you acquainted with."

There was a faint suspicion of contempt in the smile that the arrogant face of the client wore when he said those words. If the lawyer noticed this, he did not betray it, however, but changed the conversation by referring to another subject. When it had been discussed, the conversation once more reverted to the subject which had previously engaged their attention, when Mr. Buston said: "Well, Mr. Cartell, I have only to say I am much pleased with the admirable manner in which Count Vensieque and yourself have executed this important piece of business for me. Do you remember the sum agreed to between us for the execution of this job?"

The lawyer named the sum mentioned, and the client handed him a cheque for the amount claimed by Vensieque; also his own fee, and by no means a small one, for lawyers generally make it a point to obtain more than sufficient remuneration for their services. This little business transacted,

Mr. Buston shook hands with his legal adviser, and took his departure.

V.

AND now, once more, all Europe was threatening to plunge into a war even more terrible than the long and bitter strife between the United States and England. The allied powers of France and Russia were threatening to swoop down on the German Empire, which, in this plight, called on the aid of mighty England, who, ever ready to take summary vengeance on her old enemies, France and Russia, had consented to aid Germany in her, now, almost inevitable, struggle with two powerful foes. The great war vulture had now spread its dark pinions over four great countries in a civilized world, and the result threatened to be terrible. Germany, with her superb army of soldiers, and England, with her mighty fleet of potent war vessels, were two powers which no country in the world would willingly engage in warfare with, especially as they, at the present time, had the offered assistance of the Chinese Empire, a dreaded and potent nation, which was overrunning the whole of Europe to an alarming extent. Russia becoming aware of this fact, and deeming it not advisable to participate

in a struggle which would be detrimental to her own interests, had, after a short concession to France's request, withdrawn her proffered promise of assistance, and severed the alliance between herself and that country.

France maintained her position, however, and England, seeing that she still remained in the offensive, immediately entered into a compact with Germany and was now preparing for a strife which threatened to be one of the fiercest in the world's history. France, although skilled in the arts of war and invention, seemed fearful of being annihilated by the combined powers, and, therefore, made extraordinary preparations in order to be fully prepared to defend herself from the onslaughts of her powerful foes.

England's thirst for war seemed indefatigable, and in that country great preparations were being made for the coming struggle. General Sir Geo. Natells, who had returned to England shortly after his duel with Count Vensieque, had been put in command of a large force, which was to embark on the Mediterranean fleet as soon as orders from naval headquarters would warrant them doing so.

During his sojourn in England, the general had made every effort to ascertain if his plan for liberating the young lieutenant, Walter Buston, had proved a success. As the days passed by, and he still received no intelligence to warrant the

assumption that his young friend had been liberated, he began to fear that his scheme had, after all, proved a failure, and that Walter was still in confinement. The fact that he had not received any account of the emissary whom he had sent to endeavor to secure the release of the young captive, materially assisted to confirm this belief. "If I only had my friend Marston here to ferret out this extraordinary case for me," he mused.

But, unfortunately, the detective had gone to New York on important business, and would, in all probability, not return to London for some time. The fates had ordained, however, that the general should receive intelligence of his young friend sooner than he had anticipated. One evening as he was crossing a crowded thoroughfare in London, he felt a hand laid upon his shoulder, and at the same time, the owner of the hand said: "General Natells, I presume?"

The general turned, and beheld standing beside him a degraded looking specimen of humanity in the shape of an elderly man, with bloated countenance, and white, shaggy locks of hair, falling in great exuberance down over his forehead. He was dressed in a faded suit of black, and wore around his neck a white handkerchief. He carried in his hand a stout stick, and in his mouth was a wooden pipe of huge dimensions and peculiar

shape, the bowl of which was reverted in such a manner that the tobacco had fallen out of it.

One could ascertain, by a mere glance, that this man was one more of those abject wretches who are slaves to strong drink. Yet, dejected and abominable as the man's appearance was, there was a certain air about him which indicated that he had seen better days; and his tone of speech impressed the hearer with the fact that he had been well bred. Such was the individual who sought to engage the attention of Sir Geo. Natells, with a detaining hand, and with the remark:

"General Natells, I presume?"

"The same," the general replied. "What would you be wanting with me, my good man?"

The man, whose name was Antswell, but who bore the fictitious appellation of "Scottie," communicated to him the intelligence that he had important news to tell him—news that would interest him very much—and that if he would accompany him to a certain place he would be able to ascertain the nature of the news, and any explanations concerning the same would be unnecessary. Prompted by his naturally curious disposition, and by the man's solicitous manner, the general finally agreed to accompany him, and the two boarded a street car, which, after a short ride, stopped at a place called Surrey's Lane. Here the two alighted, and the general followed the

man along a long and dirty street, surrounded on each side by mean and shabby houses.

At length turning into a dark and narrow alley, the man glanced behind him to ascertain if the general was following. There was something in the glance that made Natells suspect that some treachery was intended. So, stepping hastily forward, and laying his hand heavily on the man's shoulder, he drew a revolver from beneath the folds of his cloak, and placing the muzzle to the man's temple, exclaimed, "See here, if you mean any treachery, you know the consequences, my fine fellow!"

The man was evidently very deaf, for although the general spoke in a pretty loud tone, he had to repeat the question in order that he might comprehend it. When he had done so, the man hastily assured him that no treachery was intended; and after this little episode, they proceeded quietly on their way. Reaching the end of the alley, the man mounted a flight of steps, which led up to a door in a side of a spacious wooden building, and beckoned the general to follow him. Opening the door, they both wended their way up a second flight of steps, at the top of which they halted for an instant, and "Scottie," stooping down, took a key from some secret recess in the floor, and noiselessly opened a door. Entering, the two found themselves in a little room, intensely

dark. Closing the door as softly as he had opened it, the man laid his hand on the general's arm to detain him, and then moving cautiously forward, he stooped down, and pulled back a slide which concealed a small aperture in the wall, through which a flood of light now came streaming into the room. Then, beckoning the general forward, he requested him to place his eye at the opening, and he would, by this means, ascertain why he was asked to come there that night.

The general hastily complied with "Scottie's" request, and started back, with a half-uttered exclamation of amazement.

Stretched upon the floor, in the adjoining apartment—bound hand and foot—was Wallace Emson, the emissary whom he had despatched to Heligoland, with orders to endeavor to release the young lieutenant, Walter Buston, from prison!

Impatient to learn more concerning the strange affair, the general was about to make some inquiry, when he was cautioned to observe silence by a look from his companion. So, resuming his former attitude, he remained for some time, intent to witness any further developments in conjunction with the mysterious affair.

If he anticipated witnessing anything more startling than what had already transpired, his expectations were fully realized, for presently the

door of the room in which the emissary was confined, opened, and a man, enveloped in a great coat, entered. Closing and bolting the door after him, he advanced towards the prisoner, and removing the shackles from his feet, exclaimed, in a surly tone: "Raise yourself!"

The greater number of the remainder of the man's words were spoken so low as to be almost inaudible, but the general succeeded in gleaning sufficient information from them to convince him that the speaker came there with the intention of terminating the existence of Wallace Emson, because of his having succeeded in releasing Walter Buston from prison. And while he was thus speaking, the man secretly produced a chloroformed handkerchief from a pocket of his coat, and quickly pressed it against the unsuspecting and helpless prisoner's face. The general perceiving this, and well knowing what would follow if the wretch were allowed to take his course, drew a revolver from his pocket, and placing the muzzle to the aperture so as to bring it to bear upon the would-be murderer, awaited results.

The prisoner was now unconscious from the effects of the drug, and soon a murderous looking knife gleamed in his assailant's hand. Another instant and it would have been plunged into Emson's heart, but at that instant the sharp report

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A NEAT and stylish little cottage, surrounded by a neat and stylish little flower garden, fenced in by a neat and stylish little iron railing, stood in one of the most aristocratic quarters of great London city.

Surrounding it on every side were imposing buildings, an imposing avenue of tall trees swept by its door, not far away from which an imposing fountain of water sparkled in the bright sunshine. There was a certain appearance in the surroundings of this cottage indicative of respectability and resplendence, and the cottage itself seemed to be perfectly in accord with these surroundings.

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Inside, in a cosy little parlor, a young lady was seated, wrapt in profound meditation. She could hardly be correctly termed a woman, for she had not yet attained her eighteenth year; but her sweet, grave face gave her the appearance of being older than she really was. Grace Severns was the only daughter of a retired colonel in the English army, who had lost an arm during the struggle with the United States, and had been handsomely remunerated for it by the English Government.

The girl's mother had been dead some years, but the colonel was still alive and enjoying his income as only an old soldier can. He was a jovial and genial old fellow, who looked at the world with its bright side up, and was passionately fond of his daughter. He had one son, who inherited his father's inclinations for army life, and was a corporal in General Natell's army.

Such, in brief, was the history of the inmates of the neat and stylish little cottage that stood in an aristocratic quarter of great London city.

A rap at the parlor door, and a servant announced, "A young gentleman to see you, Miss."

Grace looked quickly up, and beheld, standing beside her, Walter Buston! She started up, with a glad cry of recognition, and was folded to his bosom.

"Oh, Walter, I never expected to see you any more! They told me you were dead, Walter, and lost to me forever. Oh! I am so glad to see you. Tell me all about yourself, Walter, and where you have been all this long, long time?"

Walter told her of his long, cruel confinement in prison, of his escape, of how he had only arrived in London that morning, in company with the faithful emissary, Wallace Emson, both having been landed safely at Liverpool by the cruiser which had conveyed them from Heligoland. At the conclusion of his recital, he saw tears in

Grace's eyes, but whether they were tears of sympathy for his past sufferings or tears of joy for his safe arrival home, he could not devise. But he knew well that she was as sincere in her love of him as he was in his adoration of her. He saw her love of him beaming in her beautiful countenance, and he recognized it in the faltering tones of her sweet voice. And Walter Buston's generous heart beat swiftly, and his handsome countenance glowed with pleasure when he recognized that one tender and loving creature reposed such confidence in him, and loved him with all the ardour of a young and innocent heart.

Not many minutes after Walter had concluded narrating his prison experience, a jovial red face, surmounted by a shining bald head, was thrust in the half-open doorway of the parlor, and then withdrawn with great precipitation, as if its owner felt embarrassed for having intruded on the parlor's occupants. Walter, observing this phenomenon, however, commanded the head to enter, and the head obeyed, bringing with it a body of a man, a pair of legs, and one arm. In short, it was the good old Col. Severns himself, who stood in the doorway smiling and bowing, and with every indication of satisfaction at Walter's safe arrival home displayed on his genial countenance.

It was a happy party that were gathered in the colonel's cosy little parlor that evening.

It was late at night when Walter took his departure, with the intention of visiting his friend, the good General Natells. He called at the general's residence, but received the intelligence that he had gone out early in the day, and had not yet returned. (This was the night upon which the events recorded in the preceding chapter had transpired).

Concluding that it would be useless to endeavor to discover the whereabouts of his friend that night, he left a note for him at his residence, acquainting him with his safe arrival in London, and as the hour was now growing late, he sought a lodging house, and retired for the night.

VII.

AFTER the timely shot from the general's pistol, which laid the would be assassin cold in death, and saved the life of Wallace Emson, Natells and his companion, after considerable difficulty, succeeded in obtaining ingress to the adjoining apartment, where they found the prisoner still unconscious from the effect of the fumes of the drug he had been compelled to inhale. He was soon restored to consciousness, however, and released from his bonds; and in an extremely short space of time, the three were

journeying in the direction of General Natells' residence, situated on the outskirts of the city.

They were not long in reaching their destination; and not long after they were ushered into a handsomely furnished apartment, the general received the note which Walter Buston had left for him a few hours previous. The good general was overjoyed at the safe return of his gallant young lieutenant, and expressed his sincere regret that Walter had not been persuaded to remain until he returned.

But the general seemed eager in anticipation of hearing Emson relate how he came to be in the unpleasant situation from which he was so timely rescued by the two men in whose company he was at the present time. Emson was not long in complying with his friend's ardent request, and proceeded to relate the strange adventure by which he so nearly lost his life.

After parting from his friend, Walter Buston, (in whose companionship he had journeyed to Liverpool), he was proceeding leisurely along a crowded street, when he was suddenly seized by two men, lifted into a covered vehicle, and conveyed to the house to which "Scottie" had—a few hours afterwards—conducted the man who saved his life. The emissary was unable to ascertain why he had been thus assailed, until the words of

the would be assassin acquainted him with the reason assigned for the act.

At the conclusion of Emson's narrative, the old man "Scottie," said,

"General Natells, I know this young man well, and I know what he says to be true."

The general looked suprised, and said,

"Why, my good sir, what do you know concerning this young man?"

"Listen to me, and I will tell you all I *do* know about him," the old man replied. "I believe you, General Natells, to be a sincere friend of his, and this is the reason I have for telling you this strange story. I say strange. It is strange but nevertheless, true."

The eager manner in which the old man spoke these words surprised his hearers, but unmitigated wonder succeeded this mild surprise as he continued.

"I have come here to-night to disclose to you a secret which I have never yet disclosed to mortal being. I have no further object in revealing it than it may benefit one who is now here. The secret that the appellation of Emson to this young man is fictitious—that he is really and truly a legitimate brother to Walter Buston—has remained locked up in this breast of mine for many a long year. But the benefits accruing from my

knowledge of this secret have long ceased to exist, and I am happy to disburden my mind of it."

The two listeners, with amazement depicted on their countenances, shrank back from the man who had thus spoken, as if he were a spectre. The general was the first to recover his composure, and he asked:

"What proof can you furnish that those strange words you speak are true?"

"I cannot, gentlemen, furnish you with material proof of what I have just said. But," continued the old man, raising his hands solemnly above his head; "I call upon heaven to witness that what I have said is true, and ask its Almighty Ruler to strike me dead this instant if those words of mine are false. Listen! Sixteen years ago, I, in company with another person, stood beside the bed of a dying man. The dying man was the father of Walter and Wallace Buston, and the person who was present there, besides myself, was Frederick Buston, his brother, a man who still lives, and is one of the richest residents of this city. I was in this man's company when he received from his dying brother's lips the appointment of executor of his vast estates, and the guardianship of its heirs, Walter Buston, senior's two sons. I was a witness to this solemn contract, which Frederick Buston faithfully promised his dying brother to fulfill. But, the same Frederick

Buston proved himself to be a villain of the deepest dye. He violated the solemn promise he gave his dying brother, and trampled on the rights of his children. Extraordinary pains were taken, by him, to prevent those same children obtaining possession a knowledge of the case. For many years I was paid large sums of money for the keeping in custody of the young man who is in this room at this particular time, and I have every reason to believe that his younger brother, Walter, was treated likewise by other parties engaged for this same nefarious purpose by his designing uncle. One thing I am well aware of, and that is, that the young man is totally ignorant of the fact that he, and this young man here, are the rightful heirs to the property now in possession of Frederick Buston. For many years I kept the latter under my protection, as he himself will tell you, deluding him with the assertion that I was his rightful guardian, until, one day he mysteriously disappeared, and I did not see him any more until to-day, when I saw him seized by the two men who bore him to the house where we so opportunely arrived to save his life.

“ When Frederick Buston learned of the young man’s escape, he was in a terrible way about it. He denounced me as a villain, spoke of my negligence threatening to ruin him, and swore that he

would make me suffer for the act. After some time, he relented towards me, and promised me a large reward if I should succeed in ascertaining the whereabouts of his nephew. This mission, assigned to me by Frederick Buston, I undertook, and stimulated, as I was, by the proffered reward, with indefatigable vigilance I pursued my search; but my efforts were unattended with success until this morning, when I espied the object of my pursuit in the clutches of two men whom I believed to be emissaries of the boy's uncle. When I ascertained that the wretches were intent on murdering my boy, (for although I was forced, by stringent circumstances, to wrong him, I loved the boy, and hoped to see the day when I could put him in possession of the knowledge which had been, so long, unjustly denied him), but when, upon this occasion, I discovered that they meant to harm Wallace Emson, or, more properly, Wallace Buston, I swore that I would exert myself to prevent it, and, thank God, I have!"

As the old man thus concluded his weird narrative in a solemn voice, and with reverent posture, despite his turgid countenance, his shabby garb and his generally degraded appearance, his demeanor impressed his hearers with the belief that the extraordinary words he spoke were true.

And, as they now believed in the reliability of the old man's words, it became evident to both

the general and his emissary, that they were the two to profit by them. It became evident to Wallace Emson that he had an inveterate enemy in the person of his uncle, and that it behooved him to adopt means to facilitate his personal safety. So, after a thorough discussion of the matter, it was decided that Emson was to go to New York, and that "Scottie" was to exert himself to obtain possession of the will of the boys' deceased father, which was in the hands of Frederick Buston. It was also decided that Walter Buston was to be kept in ignorance of the affair, until the will would be recovered, when he and his brother would be the rightful owners of the property now in Frederick Buston's possession.

VIII.


ON the morning succeeding the night upon which the latterly recorded events had transpired, General Natells despatched a letter to his friend Marston, in New York, acquainting him with the particulars of the Buston case, and soliciting his aid to ferret out the matter. A few days later, he received a note from the detective, conveying the gratifying intelligence that he would be in London at an early date, when the matter would have his attention.

The general's next step was to provide comfortable quarters, in a secluded part of the city, for the man "Scottie," who promised to do all in his power to assist Marston in recovering the stolen will, which would give the two young men, Walter and Wallace Buston, their just rights.

And now, once more, duty called the good general, and his gallant young lieutenant, forth, to battle for their country's honor. The latter was placed in command of the rear division of Natell's troops. The time for embarkation soon arrived, and on a fine October morning the fleet of noble war vessels sailed proudly and swiftly over the shining waters, away from the bright shores of England, and soon were lost in the distance.

And so, like those noble ships sailing on the bright summer's sea, human lives are sailing on the perfidious river of Life, which is noiselessly and swiftly bearing them to the Ocean of Eternity!

IX.

 R. CARTELL, Barrister-at-Law, sat in his sumptuously furnished office, upon a certain day, engaged in the lucrative occupation of perusing the morning's papers, and in the unprofitable pursuit of puffing a fragrant

Havana. He was so intent in those combined occupations, that he did not become conscious of a knocking at his office door, until it had been repeated three or four times. He then arose and opened it, when he was confronted by a messenger, who handed him a card, which bore the following inscription :

"Mr. Frederick Buston requests the honor of Mr. Cartell's company at his residence, this morning, on private and particular business."

"Ah—hum, I wonder what the old humbug wants with me now?" was Mr. Cartell's mental inquiry. Then, turning to the messenger, he said,

"Tell Mr. Buston that I have much pleasnr in acceding to his request, and that I will be with him in a very short time."

The messenger bowed and withdrew.

Shortly after, Mr. Cartell emerged from his office, and entering a private conveyance, was driven rapidly off in the direction of Frederick Buston's residence. Arriving there, he was ushered by a footman into a private sitting-room, where—after a short time—he was joined by Frederick Buston. Mr. Cartell perceived that that gentleman was not looking as well as usual—having the appearance of being labouring under some violent excitement for some time past—but he immediately ascertained the cause when the client said :

"Well, Mr. Cartell, I must confess that I am a little surprised at not having a visit from you at an earlier date, and without the necessity of sending for you, to acquaint me with the particulars of the affair—to inform your humble servant whether the important job you promised to have executed for me had been executed or not!"

"My dear Mr. Buston," returned the legal adviser, with a smile, in which there lurked a suspicion of craftiness; "allow me to inform you that there is not the slightest necessity for you to excite yourself over this little matter. You know perfectly well that had anything gone amiss, I would hasten to inform you of it. But, under the circumstances, it was not necessary for me to comply with the last named obligation. Our plans have worked admirably—the job has been completed days ago—and the body of Wallace Emson reposes at the bottom of the Thames!"

The inexorable countenance of the old merchant betrayed a marked expression of satisfaction, when this last piece of intelligence was communicated to him. He had been informed that he had been the instigator of a plot—truly a horrible plot—but, nevertheless, a successful one. With him the end justified the means, no matter how dishonorable the means were. He had weighed a human life and the risk involved in taking it, against the gratification of a sinful ambition, and

the balance had been in favor of the latter. There are many men of the Frederick Buston stamp in this world—men who fight the battle of life with weapons quite the reverse of honor and honesty; but surely they are not unconscious of the fact that such actions in *this* world will prove potent barriers to their happiness in the next.

But the austere visage of Frederick Buston would not have been illuminated with the light of satisfaction had he been aware that the words of his friend and legal adviser were false in the extreme; that Wallace Emson was still alive, and well; that his enemies knew nothing of his whereabouts; that the words of the lawyer were merely a guile to persuade him that his nephew was dead, in order that he (Cartell) would receive the large reward offered for the accomplishment of the bloody deed.

The conversation relating to the subject was carried on to some further extent, when it was terminated, for the time being, by Frederick Buston expressing his entire satisfaction with the manner in which the work had been performed, and requesting his legal adviser to accompany him to a certain bank, when he would advance him the sum agreed to, some days previous, for the execution of the job.

"But, by the way," he added, in a careless tone;

"before we go, won't you take a glass or two of wine?"

The lawyer readily accepted this kind offer of his friend, and the two sat, for some time, drinking a considerable quantity of wine, and cracking a considerable number of dry jokes. The important subject already referred to, was once more resumed by Frederick Buston, who seemed to take an extraordinary delight in discussing the matter. The truth was that that gentleman rather suspected that the job had not been done as easily as his legal friend and adviser would lead him to believe; and, probably, he had serious doubts as to its having been accomplished at all. His object, therefore, was to ply the lawyer with liquor, (being well aware that he was a heavy drinker), under the influence of which, he expected that he would become communicative, when he might question him on the subject in such a manner as would lead him to disclose to him anything that would substantiate the correctness of his (Buston's) suspicions.

But, the lawyer, although he drank heavily, was on his guard, and was not at all communicative on the subject under discussion. In fact, he soon comprehended the object his friend had in view, and even went so far as to give utterance to the expression, "You needn't try to pump me, my

friend, for I have nothing to tell you about the affair, except what I have already told!"

Of course, on hearing these words, his friend emphatically denied that he had entertained any doubts as to the reliability of the other's statements concerning the matter, assuring him, at the same time, that it was mere curiosity that had impelled him to question him as he did on the subject. The conversation on the matter then terminated, as the two rose to depart. They passed out of the house—arm in arm—and entering a hansom, were driven rapidly away to the bank, where the lawyer was to receive a large amount of money, on the strength of the supposition, entertained by Frederick Buston, that his friend had executed a neat little job for him, in a precise, and neat little manner.

But neither Mr. Frederick Buston, or his legal friend was aware that a man—bearing a very strong resemblance to our friend, "Scottie"—had been seated with his ear in contact with the keyhole of the door of the room in which they had been confined, during the greater part of the time this little confidential chat had been in progress. Had they, even, been aware of this fact, it is very probable that they would not deign to pay any attention to it, as "Scottie" was a frequent visitor to Frederick Buston's house, and was privileged to enter therein when he chose. In fact, that

gentleman had frequently been present when little private affairs—although not altogether of the nature of the above—were being transacted; Frederick Buston entertaining the opinion that this Dependant of his was far too deaf to hear any conversation carried on in an ordinary tone of voice, and moreover, as "Scottie" was frequently under the influence of liquor, he considered that he—on such occasions—was not able to comprehend anything so complicated as the private transactions of a gentleman of the ability of Frederick Buston, Esquire.

But, as the person bearing such a strange resemblance to our friend "Scottie," took his departure from the residence of the already mentioned luminary, on this occasion, it was evident from the appearance of his countenance that he knew more concerning the foregoing conversation than he would wish to tell.

X.

WE will now return to Count Vensieque, and endeavour to ascertain if he has yet recovered from the injuries inflicted on his person in the duel which took place between himself and General Sir Geo. Natells. Upon this particular day on which we for the third time in

the chapters of this eventful tale, introduce him to the reader, we find him reclining on a lounge, in a handsomely furnished apartment of his spacious residence, situated on the suburbs of the city of Berlin.

His preternatural appearance, on this occasion, would suggest to any ordinary observer—not previously acquainted with the facts of the case—the fact that it was highly improbable that His Countship had emerged from the affray just alluded to, as victor, for, if his assailant had received any more serious injuries than himself, it would be safe to assume that he was a dead man long ere this, which was not the case, as the reader is well aware.

The count's left arm was tightly bandaged, and lay limp upon a cushioned support beside him; there was a serious wound in his left side, a little above the heart, giving him the most intense pain at frequent intervals, and compelling him to recline, continually, in the one position. His pale and emaciated countenance and wasted limbs, told plainly of the suffering he had recently undergone. He was, at this particular time, engaged in perusing one of the day's newspapers—by this means endeavouring to relieve his mind, for the time being, of the dismal contemplation of his extremely unpleasant position.

The door opened, and Sir Gerald Dirbey entered,

bearing in his hand a letter, which he handed to the count, with the remark—"Just received from the letter-carrier."

The count glanced at the address. It was in the handwriting of Frederick Buston. He tore it open and read :—

"London, England, Oct. 29th, 1907.

"My Dear Vensieque,—

"It had been my intention, for some time past, to communicate to you on a very important subject; but in deference to yourself, I thought it best to postpone the matter until such a time as you would be sufficiently recovered from the injuries inflicted on your person by that cur, Natells, in the unfortunate affray which recently transpired between you and him. I now take the liberty of broaching the subject to you; the purport of which you can readily guess.

"I must confess I was greatly surprised when I heard of the escape of young Buston, from prison, but I was ten times more amazed to learn, a few days later, that you—you, of all others!—had abdicated the already mentioned person! From reliable sources I have learned the facts of the case, which are simply as follows :—

"You entered into an agreement with General Natells, upon the day previous to the one on which this unfortunate affair between yourself and that person transpired. That should you be frustrated on that occasion. Walter Buston would recover his freedom. It is needless to remark that you *were* frustrated and that Walter Buston *has* regained his freedom. And now, what conclusion do I come to, when I consider the facts of the case? That Walter Buston has regained his liberty through the instrumentality of Count Vensieque!

"It is, probably, useless to make any further comments on the subject. But, before I conclude this letter, I merely wish to inform you that I would esteem it a favor if you

would return the amount sent you, some time ago, by my attorney, Mr. Cartell. Under present circumstances you cannot consistently claim this amount. Therefore you would confer a favor by returning it to me at earliest possible convenience.

"Yours,

FREDERICK BUSTON."

The count finished reading the epistle, tore it to shreds, and in a rage, flung the pieces from him.

"The mean, low, contemptible cur!" he exclaimed. "How dare he accuse me of such contemptible proceedings? 'How dare he address such an insolent letter to *me*? I, who am acquainted with facts, which, should I choose to reveal, would put the halter around his neck, in a trice! I, who, were I so inclined, could deprive him of all his ill-gotten possessions, and make him a beggar, in a day! How dare he address me in such language? How dare he falsely impeach me of being the instigator of a plot so vile? But, Ah! What's the word? Revenge! Revenge is sweet, and I'll have revenge! Frederick Buston shall know, before he is many days older, that he has been a fool to dare accuse me of acting the traitor, without the shadow of a proof to justify that accusation. He shall have reason to regret, ere long, the words contained in his insolent letter. But let me consider how I am to act. Ah! I have it. Firstly, I'll accede to the demand made at the conclusion of his letter. Then, I'll compell *him* to accede to the demand of England's laws!"

He laid his hand upon an alarm bell, close beside him, and rang it violently.

A servant appeared, whom he commanded—

"Go to my secretary and tell him to come to me immediately!"

The servant bowed and hastily withdrew to execute the errand.

In a short time the secretary entered, to whom his master addressed the following words:

"Ha! good morning, Mr. Auling, I wish to discuss a little bit of private and particular business, with you."

Mr. Auling bowed.

"You remember," his master continued, "a large sum of money sent me some time ago, by one Frederick Buston, merchant and land owner, of London, England?"

Mr. Auling smiled as he answered, "Yes."

"Well, Mr. Auling," his master once more resumed, "I wish you to immediately return that amount, in full, to the person who sent it. You understand me?"

Mr. Auling perfectly comprehended him, and would be happy to immediately comply with his request. Mr. Auling then withdrew, and his master resumed his soliloquy.

"And so," he said, "Frederick Buston thinks he can insult the pertinacious Count Vensieque with impunity? And so he thinks he can send

insolent letters to him, charging him with that which he has never been guilty of, and that he has not spirit enough to repudiate those charges? Well, he shall see! When this confounded war is terminated, I will then be free to take this little matter in hand, and convince Mr. Frederick Buston that I am not a mere milksop, who is not capable of resenting *his* slurs! But, duty now calls me away, to fight in my country's interest, and I must comply with duty's request as soon as I am sufficiently recovered to go.

"And I will have an old enemy now beside me in this struggle, for supremacy, with France; but I shall not henceforth regard him as such! If he has put me in my present position it is because I was a fool, and every fool suffers for his folly. General Natells is a *soldier*, who assists my country in her struggle with a powerful foe, and I admire his gallantry as much as I do his brave lieutenant, Walter Buston!"

XI.

UPON the day Lawyer Cartell and his client departed—arm in arm—from the residence of the latter, after having transacted a little matter of business of a private and important character, they proceeded direct to the

bank already referred to, where a large amount of money was put into the possession of the legal gentleman by Mr. Frederick Buston. The latter then invited his friend to accompany him to a certain club which he had been in the habit of frequenting, and his friend complying with this invitation, the two soon found themselves seated in a fashionable and private room of the already mentioned edifice. A bottle of wine was immediately ordered, under the exhilarating influence of which the two became, in an extremely short space of time, very intimate. The important subject which had, but a short time previous, engarbed their attention, was once again reverted to, and the following conversation that took place, thereon was animated, as the reader will readily perceive.

"Now, my dear Cartell," Frederick Buston said, with a smile on his sinister countenance; "I wish to be frank with you. Frankness is a part of my nature. I love frankness and detest insidiousness."

The lawyer coughed, dubiously.

"Now, my dear sir," Mr. Buston continued, "I have no hesitation in informing you that I brought you here to-day with an object in view. Being, as I said before, a character remarkable for frankness, I have no hesitation in informing you, at the present time, that my object in

bringing you here, was to endeavor to ascertain—by little artifices peculiar to myself—if you had really fulfilled the contract you agreed to fulfil. In fact, my dear Cartell, I have strong doubts as to the veracity of your assertion, that this young Emson, or Buston—whatever you like to term him—is dead, and that his body reposes in the Thames. I have not the least hesitation in telling you that I believe young Buston to be alive at this moment. Now, what I require from you is cogent proof that this little job has been executed. I wish to be convinced that my suspicions concerning the matter are groundless. *I wish to see the body of Wallace Buston!*"

The lawyer's face blanched slightly upon his hearing this unexpected request of his client, but he betrayed no confusion in his voice, as he replied—

"Oh, very well! Since you are so curious, I will endeavor to gratify your curiosity. Since you are inclined to disbelieve my statements I shall endeavor to show you that they are correct. I will immediately have the river dragged in the vicinity of the spot where the body was cast in; and, if at all possible, the body of Wallace Emson will be shown you!"

"Very well," said Mr. Buston; "but I must here, impress upon you the great necessity of exercising great caution in this matter. You will be cautious, Mr. Cartell?"

"Oh! certainly," rejoined Mr. Cartell. "Now, Buston, call at my office at eight, to-night, and I will show you what you desire to see. That is—of course—if what you desire to see can be recovered. Rest assured I will do all in my power to comply with your unreasonable request. Good day!" and the lawyer left the room and the house with the air of an injured man.

He strode hastily along a crowded street, with his face to the west, for some distance, paying no heed to the jostling he received from the numerous passers-by. At length, he turned into a dark and narrow alley, passed through it, and emerging into a broad street, crossed it, and once more plunged into a wilderness of low, mean, shabby buildings.

Drawing a revolver from his pocket, he examined it carefully to ascertain if it was properly loaded, for he was well aware of the desperate character of the neighborhood which he was in. At length, he stopped before a small brick building, and opening a door, descended into an underground chamber, by means of a flight of worn stone steps. There was a sickly odour in the long, winding passage which he traversed, but he did not seem to heed it in the least; and knocked at a door at the further end of the passage, which was opened by a brawny red-haired woman, who,

giving the lawyer a significant glance, invited him in.

"Ah! Biddy; and how goes it?" inquired Mr. Cartell, with a sly look at the woman.

"Shure, iverything is wurked ixecently, yer honor," responded Biddy.

The lawyer put his hand in his pocket, and drawing forth a bank note of the denomination of five pounds, carelessly tossed it to the woman, remarking, as he did so—

"That, Biddy, is for the little business we transacted the other night. You understand?"

"Faix, I do!" rejoined Biddy. "And be it the same irrand thot's bringin' yez here this evenin'?"

"Yes," said Mr. Cartell. "Now, Biddy, listen to me. I have something serious to tell you. The old man suspects our little game and is coming here to-night to view the body of Wallace Emson. Now, I want to ask you a question. Were you Colin Clarfin's lawful wife?"

"Sure, an' why do yez ax me thot question, Mистер Cartell?"

"Because it is of the utmost importance to you and me," replied Cartell.

"Well, then, since yez are determined to find out, I will tell yez. I was *not* Colin Clarfin's lawful wife!"

"Why?" was the laconic inquiry.

"Well, ye see, Mистер Cartell, bein' livin' wid

him was jist the same as bein' married to him. It's usual for people to live together—not married—an' the public in gineral think them man an' woif. Ah—'Er—Everybody in this neighborhood does it! It wouldn't do not to do it, don't yez see?"

"I see," returned the other. "Now, I want to suggest a plan by which we can deceive that old humbug, Fred. Buston. And it is this:—have Clarfin's body secretly conveyed here to-night, at any time before eight—the features lacerated beyond recognition, and the clothes damp and muddy; and that, I believe, will settle the old man's doubts forever!"

The plot was such a diabolical one that even the red-haired prostitute gazed, with horror, upon the man who suggested it. But a roll of bank-notes soon overcame any prejudicial opinions she might have entertained concerning the matter; and in a short time, Mr. Cartell took his departure, with the assurance that when he would call around at eight, that night, in company with the other person, everything would be as he desired.

It may be necessary to inform the reader, at this point, that Colin Clarfin was the man who was shot by General Natells, while attempting the assassination of the young emissary, Wallace Emson. The man's body had not been interred, although considerable time had elapsed since he had met his death; the cause of this extraordinary

proceeding being the fact that a secret burial had been planned, the lawyer being afraid to risk a public burial, for fear the authorities would become suspicious, and investigate the matter.

Everything was performed as contrived by Mr. Cartell, and when Fredrick Buston arrived, that evening, in that gentleman's company, he was fully convinced that it was the horribly mutilated body of his nephew, Wallace Emson, that was exposed to his view; and he—there and then—tendered his sincere apologies to the worthy Mr. C. for having entertained doubts as to the veracity of his previous statements concerning the matter.

XII.

MR. Frederick Buston sat in a private apartment of his sumptuous residence, upon a certain day about a month succeeding that upon which the events recorded in the last chapter had occurred. Having despatched a message to his friend and legal adviser, the worthy Mr. Cartell, requesting his immediate presence at this particular place, he now sat in expectation of that gentleman's arrival.

"Ah, come at last!" he exclaimed, as the door bell rang violently.

He rose hastily, and went to the door, but much

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to his disgust, he discovered that the individual who rang the bell was not his legal friend, Mr. Cartell, but "Scottie"—apparently in a mild state of intoxication. The exclamation uttered by Mr. Buston, on thus beholding an old friend, was not at all complimentary to the old friend, but was, probably, not heard by that gentleman—at least Mr. Buston thought so.

"I want to come in," was Mr. B.'s old friend's laconic supplication.

"Very well," returned that gentleman.

"I want to come in," repeated "Scottie."

"Very well, I say!" roared Mr. Buston.

"O, first rate!" said "Scottie," evidently taking this last rejoinder of his friend as an inquiry concerning his health.

"O! who the devil cares if you are or not?" returned the other, in a low voice.

"What's that you're saying?" inquired "Scottie," eyeing him suspiciously.

"I was merely remarking that it was a fine day," "Scottie."

"Then, I say—you looked extraordinarily glum about it! And, look here, am I to come in?"

Seeing that it was useless to waste any more words in endeavouring to make his Dependant comprehend him, Mr. Buston took him by the lappel of his coat, led him into his office, and pointed to a lounge in a corner of the apartment,

in mute request that he be seated thereon. "Scottie" complied, and stretching himself on the lounge, unceremoniously turned his back to his host, and almost immediately, was snoring like a trooper.

Scarcely had this been done, when the door-bell rang, for the second time, and immediately afterwards, Mr. Cartell was ushered by a footman into the office.

"Ah, good day, Mr. Buston!" exclaimed that gentleman, with a smile and a bow.

"Ah, good day!" returned Mr. Buston. "Pray be seated." Mr. Cartell complied, and his friend continued:

"I am glad you have so promptly responded to my summons. I was in urgent need of your presence here to-day, as I wished you to examine some papers for me, of a private and particular character."

The lawyer, with a slight inclination of the head towards "Scottie," asleep on the lounge, warily inquired,

"What means that?"

"Oh, *he*," returned the other. "You need not be afraid of him. He's as deaf as a post, and drunk besides! But, as I was saying, I wish you to examine some papers for me. You are probably not aware that I still have in my possession the original will—the will made by my brother,

in which he wills his two sons all the property now in my possession!" Now, the question is—would it not be a wise plan to destroy this will, immediately?"

Mr. Cartell desired to have the privilege of examining the document in question, before he would answer that question. Upon hearing this request, Mr. Buston opened an iron safe that stood in a corner of the apartment, and abstracting therefrom a large metal box, invited the lawyer to examine its contents. This invitation Mr. Cartell, with great celerity, accepted; placing himself on his knees, on the floor, for that purpose; while his friend took a seat close beside him. A considerable number of documents had been scrutinized by the legal gentleman before the most important one of all was brought to light.

"Ah, this is the will in question?" said Mr. Cartell, preparatory to an examination of that document.

"Yes," rejoined Mr. Buston, and the words had scarcely been uttered when a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, from behind; and both men turning, at the same instant, were confronted by the gleaming barrels of two revolvers, aimed directly at them. Frederick Buston uttered an exclamation of amazement, for holding the revolvers was the man whom he had previously

supposed to have been "Scottie," but who now displayed under his coat, the badge of a detective. Then a voice—by no means "Scottie's"—said,

"Mr. Cartell, I'll trouble you to hand over the document you, at present, hold in your hand."

The lawyer was about to comply, when his companion, with a cry, in which rage and despair were horribly mingled, wrenched the document from his hand, and made an effort to throw it into the fire. But, before he could accomplish this deed, the strong hand of Frank Marston, (for he it was) caught his arm, and wrested the paper from his grasp.

The worthy Mr. Cartell, who had, heretofore, remained a passive spectator of this animated scene—having, by this time, become convinced that, under the existing condition of affairs, it would be advisable for him to take a hasty departure—made a dash for the door, with terror depicted on his countenance; but he was somewhat disappointed to discover that it was securely locked. Goaded to desperation by his situation, he seized an ink-bottle that stood on a desk, near at hand, and was about to hurl it at the head of the detective, when the latter suddenly turned, and caught his upraised arm. The next instant, a pair of handcuffs were dexterously slipped on the legal gentleman's wrists; the detective coolly remarking as he did so :

"Oh, my dear sir, I have met scores of desperate characters like you, during the course of my career as detective. Now, I have another pair for the other gent, and if he will quietly submit to my affixing them to his wrists, he will save me the trouble of having to adjust them by force!"

Seeing that it was useless to resist, Frederick Buston suffered himself to be handcuffed, and led away, in company with his worthy friend, and companion in crime, Mr. Cartell. At the door of the house, a policeman was waiting to convey them to police headquarters; where they arrived in due time, and were locked up on the charge of having been accomplices in an attempted murder—preferred against them by Detective Marston.

XIII.

THE great war vulture, which had spread its dark and murderous pinions over the countries—England, France and Germany, had now been completely annihilated; and the impending war cloud, which for a time threatened nothing but desolation and bloodshed, had now been superseded by a sun of prosperity and peace.

* * * * *

On a fine Spring morning the long absent ships—which constituted the squadron sent to the seat of the recent war—returned to their native shores.

They sailed proudly up the mighty Thames, and before the tall spires and gilded domes of the greatest city in the world, dipped their colours in the water, in token of their victories.

And, on the deck of the proudest ship in that noble fleet, a handsome young soldier stood, gazing with delight on the dear old familiar scenes that became more and more distinct as the ships drew nearer to them. In the impressive memorials of a long and terrible war a name is now conspicuous—the name of a brave and generous soldier, whom England's king, in commemoration of his gallant conduct, is about to create a knight. And yet, Walter, you consider a glance at *her* sweet face superior to that high honor about to be bestowed on you by England's mighty ruler! In haste you travel the long, busy streets, and as at the door of a little cottage you knock, with a heart swiftly beating, and a face all glowing, it is she who falls into your strong arms, with a glad cry of welcome.

* * * * *

Upon that night, when the bright stars looked down from their beds of glory, far up above the azure clouds, and the old spectacular moon shed her silvery light over a world of sin and sorrow—in a cosy little sitting-room of that cosy little cottage, Walter told her the story of his exploits

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in the great war; of his days and nights of pain and suffering—for he had been wounded—and of many other things concerning the great struggle; and when he had concluded Grace had burst into tears.

"Oh, I'm so glad to have you back, Walter; so glad! so very glad!"

Once, during his recital, he related an incident of how a brave German cavalier had saved his life at the cost of his own; for in the heat of battle, one of the enemy's soldiers had a musket levelled at his breast—"when that brave cavalier," said Walter, "perceiving my danger, stepped in front of me; and receiving the shot that was intended for me; fell dead, at my feet. The man that gave his life for mine!"

And taking a photograph from his pocket, he held it up for her to see. It was a photograph of Count Vensieque!

XIV.

THE dim prison jet shed a lurid light on a strange group assembled in the cell of a doomed prisoner. Constituting that group were many faces and forms conspicuous in this tale. There the old prisoner sat, in his dismal prison apartment, with his head bowed down,

maintaining a dogged silence, and his pallid countenance as inexorable as if it were a counterpart of the cold, grey stone of his prison cell. There—close beside him—with his hand upon his shoulder; his flinty face lit up with an united expression of cunning and conceit, stood Lawyer Cartell. An old hag of a woman huddled in one corner of the apartment, whose face bore the stamp of contamination and villainy—the red-haired prostitute, Bridget Clarfin.

Walter Buston, General Natells and Detective Marston, stood facing those persons, when the old prisoner looked up and said,

"Well, gentlemen, why do you not proceed with the business that brought you here to-night?"

"As soon as the presence here of one who is to bear evidence against you, will warrant us, we will not hesitate, in the least, to proceed with a business that will be disagreeable to you," the detective replied; and as he was speaking, "Scottie" entered. The face of Frederick Buston blanched, as he looked up and beheld him, but he only said,

"And so you bring this drunken wretch here to endeavour to scare *me* with his lying stories?"

"Frederick Buston," returned Marston, the mission that brings us here to-night is not one of lying and hypocrisy, but of charity and justice. Charity towards yourself, for we will deal leniently

with you, if you confess all. Justice towards your nephew, Walter Buston, (now beside you), and to his brother, in a foreign land. The charges which this man "Scottie" will prefer against you, will be sustained by ample proofs. Remember that you are now an old man—old in crime as well as in years—and that to endeavour to conceal your knowledge of the terrible crimes with which you are charged will not be likely to benefit you any more than it will prolong your life. Listen attentively to what this man "Scottie" has to say to you, and of you, for the words he is about to speak concerning you, here, this night, are God's truth. He asks you, now, to remember a solemn scene, many years ago, when you and he stood—"When you and I stood by the bedside of a dying man," said "Scottie," resuming the thread of the discourse, and addressing Frederick Buston. "That man was your only brother, and upon that occasion, you gave him your solemn promise that you would protect his orphan children, and would, when they came of proper age, put them in possession of that property which they were justly entitled to. And did you carry out this promise? No! You violated this sacred trust reposed in you by your dying brother, deprived his children of their rightful possessions, deprived them of the knowledge of their parentage, and ill-treated and illuded them in every possible manner. Now,

what have you got to say to these charges? Are they not true?"

In response to the questions the prisoner calmly said :

"And this is all you have to tell me? This mans' words are of not so startling a character as I anticipated from the nature of your introduction of them, Mr. Detective. If you expect me to attach any importance to them you are greatly mistaken."

"These, by no means, are the only misdemeanors we charge you with," replied the detective. "There remains another grave and terrible offence, of which you have, without the shadow of a doubt, been guilty."

"Say on!" returned the person addressed, with a sneer. "Say on!" I know such men as you speak nothing but the truth!"

"In cases of this kind all God-fearing men do," Marston rejoined. "Listen, Frederick Buston! I have something to tell you which will make you tremble to hear—base, unscrupulous villain that you are! What if I were to tell you that your hands are stained with blood?"

"You would tell the truth!" the old prisoner tremblingly replied.

"No," rejoined Marston, sternly. "I would not tell the truth! You believe, at this instant, that the body of your nephew reposes at the

bottom of a river; but it is not so. The man who stands beside you—an even more consummate villain than yourself—deceived you. Adept, as you were, in the arts of cunning and deceit, you were not cunning enough for him. He deluded you with the mere statement that Wallace Buston had met an untimely death by the hand of an assassin, and obtained a large sum of money from you on the strength of your belief in that statement. You viewed, in the supposed body of your murdered nephew, the body of his would-be assassin, who met his death by an avenging hand while attempting the execution of his dastardly deed."

With a countenance purple with rage, Frederick Buston started up, and clutching the lawyer by the throat, would have choked that worthy gentleman to death, had not the detective interfered, and prevented him. When order was restored, Marston resumed his discourse—addressed to Frederick Buston.

"Being an imposter yourself did not prevent your being deceived by a still more accomplished deceiver. You failed to recognize in the supposed "Scottie" the person of your humble servant, Marston, upon the day you paid your worthy legal friend a large sum of money, for having—as you believed—executed an important job for you. But you were mistaken. The dastardly deed was

never accomplished, although your friend, Cartell—for personal reasons which you are now well acquainted with—deluded you with the belief that it was. You also were mistaken in supposing that through the instrumentality of Count Vensieque, your nephew, Walter Buston, who now stands before you, regained that liberty of which you succeeded, for a short time, in depriving him. Now, Frederick Buston, we have told you all, and what we have told, you know to be true. We are disposed to deal leniently with you should you choose to humbly ask the pardon of those whom you have wronged, and endeavour to make reparation for your past misconduct by leading, in the future, an honest and upright life."

The old man started to his feet, his form trembling, his countenance of an ashy hue, his eyes almost starting from their sockets, as he shrieked,

"Cowards! Liars! Imposters! How dare you come here to dictate to me? How dare you come here with your lying stories and false promises? As if I were to be influenced by such! Bah! Go preach to fools, and let wise men alone. Even if what you charge be true, what does it signify to me? You only have the evidence of a drunken wretch to that effect. Talk about pardon and reparation. I show no mercy, and I expect none. You are playing me a little game. Beware how you play it! Am I to be branded as a mur-

derer through the lying stories of a crowd of fools? We shall see! I'll cheat you all. I'll cheat you—dogs that you are; and may the bitterest curse of Hell darken the remainder of your existence, and blight your souls forever in a region of eternal fire!"

As he shrieked those words, with the vehemence of a wild beast, a deathly pallor overspread his countenance, a violent trembling took possession of him—he tottered and the next moment fell heavily to the floor, with the blood gushing forth from his ears, nose and mouth. The horror-stricken witnesses to this sad spectacle raised the unfortunate man to a sitting posture, and made every effort to restore him to life; but without avail. He had burst a blood-vessel by the violence of his excitement, and death was instantaneous.

XV.

THE work of settling the affairs of the deceased, Frederick Buston, occupied only a few weeks, at the end of which time Detective Marston had the pleasure of putting into the hands of Walter Buston the will, by which he and his brother obtained possession of their father's vast estates.

The worthy Mr. Cartell, having been tried, was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for having

been an accomplice in an attempted murder. Bridget Clarfin—in consideration of having turned King's evidence—received a free pardon from the crown. "Scottie" was well rewarded for the noble services he had rendered, in helping Detective Marston to bring to justice two men guilty of a terrible crime, and for having materially assisted the two brothers in regaining the valuable possessions which, for so long a time, had been unjustly denied them.

On learning of the kindness which General Natells displayed towards Walter, his brother induced him to accept a share of his father's estates.

Detective Marston also received a liberal reward from the generous-hearted young man whose life he had saved, and also a large amount from Walter, in consideration of the happy manner in which he had terminated the important case on which he had latterly been employed.

The first baby boy upon the bosom of Grace Buston, was christened Wallace, and when, with the lapse of time, Walter beheld children's happy faces clustering around his knee. he loved to tell them his oft-repeated story of a brave nobleman who died that he might live.

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